

ON TRACK with BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle



How to Eat Better Meal by Meal | **DINNER**

It's easy to get into the habit of stopping to get a bite to eat on the way home, but those restaurant meals come with a nutritional cost. If you're ready to get serious about eating better, the first place to start is by preparing foods at home. With a little pre-planning and practice, you can overcome the lure of restaurant food and be a dinnertime superstar in no time.

Why Bother?

Although food prep may not be at the top of your “want to do” list at the end of the day, the many benefits to cooking at home are worth the effort—take a look:

Better nutrition | Home-prepared meals are generally more nutritious and include more fresh fruits and vegetables than convenience meals. They are also lower in calories, carbohydrates, fat, added sugar, preservatives, and artificial ingredients. Bonus—studies find that eat-

ing home-cooked meals five or more days a week is linked to living a longer life.

Higher quality food | When you prepare your own food, you can choose to use fresh, unprocessed ingredients—the key to eating better.

Right-sized portions | When we're served large portions, we tend to eat more. At home, you can get in the habit of serving right-sized portions on smaller plates and avoid excessive calories.

Family time | By watching and participating in food prep activities, your children are learning skills and behaviors that will help them with a lifetime of healthy eating. Not only that, but eating meals as a family regularly is associated with happier and healthier kids, better school performance and teens that are less likely to use alcohol, drugs or cigarettes.

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Save money | Studies show that eating out at restaurants costs 4-5 times more than the same meal prepared at home.

Feel better | Some studies show that adopting a diet of healthy, home-cooked meals can increase your resilience to stress; reducing anxiety and depression—all while boosting your outlook.

Make the Most of Your Time

If you're ready to start some new habits and reap the benefits of home cooked meals, we've got some tips to help you be an efficient cook and make the most of your time.

- **Have a plan.** Start with a blank 1-month calendar and pencil in 2-3 favorite meals each week. Then think about how you can reuse leftovers from your favorites to create other meals throughout the week. For example, slow cooker pork tenderloin is a healthy meal to slice and serve with a vegetable. Make extra so you can dice and add to a quesadilla one night and add no-added-sugar barbeque sauce for another meal. Cook once for 3 meals—that's a time saver.
- Keep it simple. Repeat family favorites throughout the month and select recipes that don't have a long list of costly ingredients.
- Share the responsibility with your spouse, children, a roommate, or a friend. Cooking with others can be a fun relationship building activity.



WEEKLY REMINDER: PLANNING YOUR MEALS PREVENTS POOR DECISIONS

- Multitask: chat on the phone, listen to an audio book or watch TV while you cook.
- Buy pre-washed bags of chopped vegetables or try a cook-at-home delivery service where the ingredients and recipes arrive on your doorstep.
- Do some of the preparation ahead of time. For example, chop vegetables over the weekend to cut down on weekday cooking time.
- Load a slow cooker with meat and vegetables in the morning and come home to a piping hot meal at night.
- Make meals in bulk and freeze leftovers in single portions to eat when you don't have the time or energy to cook.
- Stock up on staples and keep ingredients that you use frequently on hand. Frozen fruits and vegetable can extend the time between shopping trips.
- Use your weekly menu to create a shopping list then add in seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks. Organize your list by the path you travel through the grocery store.
- Keep an ongoing grocery list in your kitchen so you can add items as you run out.

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Get Creative

Add an element of fun and creativity to meal planning and prep.

- Play your favorite music and dance around as you chop and peel.
- Create your own custom cookbook. Search for and gather new recipes for no-added-sugar treats, sides, salads and entrees while you're waiting in a doctor's office or during commercial breaks. Print recipes and store in plastic sheet protectors in a 3-ring binder. You can add to your cookbook or delete recipes anytime you like.
- We eat more of the things that are in our line of vision. Notice throughout your day the foods that are clearly visible. Make a concerted effort to have fresh, wholesome foods front and center in your refrigerator, on your counter, in your cupboards and at work.

Armed with a plan and healthy foods on hand, you are well on your way to eating a better diet.

Set up your environment for success.

**THOSE WHO FAIL to PLAN,
PLAN to FAIL.**

WINSTON CHURCHILL

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We'd love to hear from you!

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SHARE YOUR IDEAS

Submit your favorite recipes and success tips to be included in our next newsletter. Be sure your recipes follow Barix nutritional guidelines.

Send to dhart@foresthealth.com.

RECIPES



Mini Lasagna

- 16 oz ground beef (90% lean)
- 1 can Hunts Garlic and Onion Spaghetti Sauce (or equivalent)
- 1 tsp dried oregano, divided
- ½ tsp dried basil
- 2 cups part skim ricotta cheese (or cottage cheese)
- 24 small square wonton wrappers
- 2 cups shredded part skim mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Brown ground beef in a large skillet over medium heat until cooked through. Add spaghetti sauce and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce to low heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, stir together the ricotta, oregano, and basil. Spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray and place a wonton wrapper into each of the 12 cups, pressing firmly in the bottom of the cup and up the sides.

Divide half of the ricotta mixture among the 12 muffin cups. Layer next with ½ of the meat mixture and then top each cup with 2 tsp of mozzarella.

Gently press another wonton wrapper on top of the mozzarella layer. Top with remaining ricotta, followed by remaining meat sauce and then mozzarella. Place in preheated oven and bake for 10 minutes. Let cool. Makes 12 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 258 calories, 21 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 16 grams carbohydrate, 535 mg sodium

Taco Lettuce Cups

- 1 lb. lean ground beef (95% lean)
- 1 package taco seasoning, low sodium
- 1/2 c. shredded Cheddar
- 8 large lettuce leaves, rinsed and dried
- 1 avocado, chopped
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 cup fresh salsa

Cook ground beef in large non-stick skillet. Follow instructions on taco seasoning. Serve taco meat in lettuce cups. Garnish with cheddar, onion, avocado and salsa. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 249 calories, 14 grams protein, 8 grams fat, 11 grams carbohydrate, 377 mg sodium.

Impossibly Easy Cheeseburger Pie

- 1 lb. extra lean ground beef
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup Bisquick®
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1/2 cup liquid egg substitute

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat 9" pie plate with cooking spray. Cook ground beef and onion in skillet until beef is brown; drain. Spread in pie plate; sprinkle with cheese. Stir remaining ingredients in separate bowl until well mixed. Pour into pie plate. Bake for 25 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 283 calories, 26 grams protein, 11 grams fat, 18 grams carbohydrate, 406 mg sodium.